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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 000633

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/PDPA FOR DALTON, MITCHELL AND SIMS
IRAQ PD FOR SMITH, PINESS AND ROOKARD
NSC FOR JENDAYI FRAZER
LONDON FOR GURNEY
PARIS FOR NEARY
NAIROBI FOR PFLAUMER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [IZ](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [KMDR](#) [ZI](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION WAR WITH IRAQ; HARARE

1. Opinion articles carried in the March 28 edition of the independent daily "The Daily News" and the March 27 edition of the independent weekly "The Financial Gazette" focus on the ongoing United States-led military campaign to disarm Iraq. Excerpts:

2. Under headline "Bush hoping for better luck with Saddam than with bin Laden," Farai Makotsi dedicated his weekly column "Beyond the Mountains," published on page 11 in the March 28 edition of the independent daily "The Daily News," to a rebuttal of the coalition rationale for going the war in Iraq. Makotsi said that, apart from wanting to control Iraqi's oil riches, the "war is good business for the U.S. defense industry." Excerpts:

"...The optimism displayed a week ago by U.S. and British officials and their military commanders of a 'quick and successful' strike against Iraq is all but subsiding. The initial shrill tone of the invasion coverage by the U.S. and United Kingdom media is subduing. Somborness is slowly taking over. I'm getting a distinct feeling everyone here... is against the U.S.-UK invasion of Iraq. I'm feeling exactly the same, but not because I have a special affection for the Iraqi leader. Quite to the contrary: I abhor anyone, anywhere in the world who believes and acts as if he or she has a God-given... right to rule infinitely - especially one who rides roughshod over his citizenry, denying them their basic human rights and freedoms of expression. Rather, I simply do not buy the reasons Bush and Tony Blair, the British Premier, are giving to justify an attack on Iraq.

"...Besides oil interests, I suspect the hawks in the U.S. government are going after Iraq for another reason: the American economy is failing to pull out of a recession. What better way of jump-starting growth than engage in war, however sumptuous the reasons for doing so maybe? War is good business for the U.S. defense industry, which lately has been languishing in the doldrums. There are more defense industry jobs available now to keep the engine of war roaring. The troops have to be fed. Medicine supplies should be in abundance. It's more jobs for the fellas back home. Then there is Bush's single-minded obsession with finishing the job his father, former President George Bush, started with the Gulf War 12 years ago but never fully accomplished - driving Saddam out of power. He (President George W. Bush) hopes, I suppose, to have more luck with Saddam than Osama bin Laden - unless, of course, the sandstorm really gets in the way."

3. Under headline "It's time to flush out the Saddams of this world" the March 27 edition of the independent weekly "The Financial Gazette" carried an opinion piece by Sydney Masamvu - the paper's Assistant Editor - on page 18 in which he hails the ongoing United States-led military campaign to disarm Iraq, saying, "The year 2003 should be dedicated to flushing out dictators the world over - in Baghdad, Havana, Jakarta, southern Africa - and send them running." Excerpts:

"Without a United Nations resolution, it will remain debatable whether George W. Bush and Tony Blair's war against Saddam Hussein was the right option or not. Indeed, it could be argued that Bush and Blair are probably guilty of attempting to subject the U.N. system to the

same dictatorial tendencies they accuse Saddam of practicing in Iraq. But, the reality is that only resolute action, fire and force if need be, is the way to get any dictator to change tack.

"I personally wish the kind of forthrightness, frankness and above all decisiveness exhibited by Bush in his handling of Saddam would catch up with our leaders here in Africa, especially those spearheading the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD). Such a determined stance against tyranny would drive the many tin-pot dictators flourishing in many an African country out of the continent. The year 2003 should be dedicated to flushing out dictators the world over - in Baghdad, Havana, Jakarta, southern Africa - and send them running for dear life. Progressive forces must emulate the example set by the Americans and with all in their power confront the dictators in their corner of the world for, Anglo/American handling of Saddam has shown, quiet diplomacy is a pipe dream."

14. Comment: Masamvu's piece is a good illustration of one current of opinion shared by some Zimbabweans opposed to the Mugabe government. That opinion holds that Saddam and Mugabe are roughly equivalent and should be treated with equivalent roughness. End comment.

SULLIVAN